REUSE AND CULT AT THE MYCENAEAN TOMBS OF KEPHALONIA IN THE ANCIENT HISTORICAL PERIODS*

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The reuse of Mycenaean tombs for cult purposes in the historical periods, usually referred to as tomb cult, is documented in many parts of Greece and to date a long bibliography exists on the subject¹. This could take the form of new burials in the tombs, but more commonly it is manifested by the deposition in the interior of the tombs or their immediate vicinity of offerings of pottery vessels, jewellery, figurines, loom-weights, miniature vessels or other small objects. Less common is the occurrence of burnt layers of animal bones (possible evidence of sacrifices or meals), or the re-arrangement and removal of human bones. Only exceptionally are altars or shrines erected in association with the tombs.

The engagement of the living with the dead through ritual acts at burial places is a phenomenon shared by many ancient societies and has its origins in what seems to be a cross-cultural preoccupation with the dead and a belief in the power that they hold in the world of the living. The meaning and intentions behind the cults, however, are particular to every society. In the early days of the discussion about tomb cults in Greece, N. Coldstream presented the archaeological evidence agreeing with Farnell’s theory that tomb cults during the ‘heroic’ age of the 8th century, when the largest number of cases is documented, were to be attributed on the whole to the spread of Homeric epics and the belief among the living that the tombs were those of the epic heroes². But in the 1980s and 1990s a number of influential publications pointed out the difficulties with this thesis, and through test cases linked the practice to responses motivated by a variety of social and political realities and pressures in the separate contexts, including the threats to land ownership or to identity, or claims to status or power through presumed lineage links³.

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1 I wish to thank Dr G. Grigorakakis of the Ephorate of Kephallenia, Dr O. Vikatou and Mr A. Sotiriou for permission to publish the post-Mycenaean material from the excavations by Sp. Marinatos and P. Kalligas at the cemetery of Metaxata.


Recent studies have also dealt more comprehensively with the diachronic evidence of the cult, from its earliest occurrence (10th c. BC at the latest) to its second peak of popularity in the Hellenistic period (4th – 2nd c. BC). The possible recipients of these largely anonymous ritual acts were now said to include ancestors, heroized ancestors, local heroes, Hesiod’s earlier generations of heroes and legendary heroes, although Homer and the epic heroes have continued to play their part in the discussion.

Tomb-cult in Kephalonia: the history of the discoveries in brief

The first evidence of post-Mycenaean material from the tombs of Kephalonia came to light during the earliest archaeological investigations on the island in the first decades of the 20th century. Sp. Marinatos was the first archaeologist to discuss what he called the ‘worship of the dead’ after discovering pottery from the historical periods in his excavations in Livatho, at the Mycenaean cemetery of Lakkithra and particularly at Metaxata (tomb A), where he found evidence of activity inside and outside the tomb, which he dated to the 6th and the 1st c. BC. In 1960 he excavated two further tombs at Metaxata (Δ and E) on the NW face of the same low rocky elevation as tomb A and at a short distance from it, but he never published their contents. The post-Mycenaean pottery finds from these tombs were nonetheless referenced by Coldstream (1976), who however erroneously mentioned the location of the tombs as Skala (in the region of Pronnoi in the SE of the island) instead of Metaxata, an error which has been repeated in all subsequent English-language publications.

In 1973 P. Calligas excavated a third tomb on the north face of the site at Metaxata (tomb Σ). The tomb has not been published, but Calligas referred to pottery of Geometric and Archaic date from the tomb in his contribution in the proceedings of the 5th Panionian Conference (1991), where he refutes any likely connection between the pottery finds in the tombs and the epics and even considers the fear of the dead as a possible reason for the offerings. Recently in the context of the wider Livatho Valley Survey project (The Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies in collaboration with the ΛΕ’ Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, 2004-2008), we surveyed the fields around the tombs of Metaxata and collected a considerable quantity of pottery sherds from the field in front of Metaxata tomb A. This has led us to re-examine the post-Mycenaean pottery from Marinatos’s excavations and to review the nature of tomb cult on the island in general. The evidence, which in the meantime has been enhanced by further cases, shows that the phenomenon was diachronic and widespread. The distribution of sites is shown on the map (Fig. 1).

4 Alcock (supra n. 1); Κορρές (supra n. 1).
5 ‘Eponymous’ tomb cults are exceptional. A cult of the mythical hero Aiatos was suggested for a tholos tomb at Georgiko near Xironeri (Thessaly), see Mazarakis-Ainian “Heroes in Early Iron Age Greece and the Homeric Epics”, ch.5, in S. Sherratt & J. Bennet (eds), Archaeology and Homeric Epic, Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017, 104-105.
7 Coldstream (supra n. 2), 6 n. 41, Fig. 1; The error stemmed from the misreporting of the finds in the Archaeological Reports 1960-61, 16, and reappears in Morris 1988, supra n. 3, fig. 3 & Tab. 1, C; Antonaccio (supra n. 1) 139.
8 Π.Γ. Καλλιγάς, “Η «Ομηρική Κεφαλονιά»”, Πρακτικά του Ε’ Διεθνούς Πανελλήνιου Συνεδρίου. 17-21 Μαΐου 1986, τόμος 3, 1991, 69-76. The author considers the event of the epics and hero cult to be two parallel phenomena with their origins in the “heroic period” of the 10th and 9th centuries.
Tomb cult in Kephalonia: the Protogeometric, Geometric and Early Archaic periods (11th-6th c. BC)

The earliest post-Mycenaean use of the tombs on the island can now be dated to the Protogeometric period (mid 11th - 10th c. BC), with two instances from the district of Livatho. Firstly, from Metaxata A9, the largest and most well-appointed tomb of the cemetery (Figs 2 and 3), two sherds among the much more abundant later pottery from the fill of tomb (discussed below) belong to the local Protogeometric style: a ribbed stem from a kylix (Fig. 4) and a small sherd, probably from a skyphos, decorated with multiple loops. Both belong to EPG-MPG types with parallels among the pottery from the cave of Polis on Ithaki.10 Secondly, a squat trefoil-mouthed oenochoe (AM 1963) was found inside the chamber of the unpublished Metaxata Στ, which also bears multiple loops on a reserved shoulder panel.11 From outside the district of Livatho, Y. Voskos and O. Metaxas presented at this Panonian conference two small PG vessels, which Marinatos had found immediately inside the entrance of the tholos tomb he excavated at Mavrata (Koroni) in 1936. All the tombs had ceased being used for burial by the early 11th c. at the latest. The only post-Mycenaean burial in a tomb is the pithos burial reported from the monumental princely tholos tomb at Tzanata (Poros), where the dead was furnished with a pair of long bronze pins.12

No further depositions were made in any of the tombs for at least a century and a half. When they reoccur, the focus is on the tombs situated on the Metaxata hillock. They are made in at least two separate phases. The first phase can be dated to the the Late Geometric period. In tomb Δ two monochrome 8th c. BC Corinthian trefoil oenochoai (AM1789 & AM1790, Fig. 5) were laid inside the chamber, and in the neighbouring tomb Στ, the only one we know from P. Calligas’ report to have been breached by way of a shaft made into the dromos, two small unpainted handmade jugs of Argive or Corinthian origin, also dating from the 8th c.13, were found one inside the entrance and the other in the interior of the chamber of the tomb. The most impressive offering, however, was made in tomb E, where a large Corinthian Subgeometric krater (AM 1797, h. 0.45 m, Fig. 6) dated to the late 8th century,14, was placed inside the tomb to the right of the entrance.15 The next offerings at Metaxata were made about one to one and a half centuries later, between the late 7th and mid 6th century, when the breached entrances of the tombs had probably filled in again. From tomb A, possibly because of its later intensive use, there is no pottery dating from the 8th century, and only two albeit interesting pottery fragments were assigned by Marinatos to the late 7th-6th c. BC: a large sherd from a pithos with a cable motif in relief found in the middle level of the chamber fill, and an amphora handle found in the dromos which bore the inscribed letters EV, using the rare archaic form of

9 The sherds are included among the unpublished post-Mycenaean material excavated by Marinatos in the dromos and fill of Metaxata A, which is kept in the Argostoli Museum (see n. 25, below).
13 Καλάντας (supra n.8), 74.
15 The information about the position of the pottery within the tombs comes from the relevant entries in the Argostoli Museum manuscript catalogue (1973-4).
inverted Lambda\textsuperscript{16}. From the chamber floor of tomb Στ Καλλιγας retrieved a Corinthian kotyle dateable to the first half of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{17}. But the most interesting finds were again those made by Marinatos in tomb E. Here, five fine vessels were placed as offerings, all dating from the third quarter to the end of the 7\textsuperscript{th} century and all likely imports. Three of them - a bowl, probably Ionian (AM 1799, Fig. 7), a cup-skyphos, probably Corinthian (AM 1800, Fig. 8), and a Corinthian alabastron (AM 1802, Fig. 9)- were deposited inside the large Geometric krater. A large Ionian skyphos (AM 1798, Fig. 10) from about 600 BC, and part of a Corinthian aryballos (now lost) were found in the interior of the chamber\textsuperscript{18}. It is likely that these offerings represent one event or separate events that were linked between them, and that the later depositions acknowledged the significance of the previous ritual act, which was the offering of the krater. The only other instance of reuse in the Archaic period comes from Marinatos’ excavations at Lakkithra (1931), where he found an oenochoe (AM 1138) probably dating from the 7\textsuperscript{th} c. BC in tomb B as well as a few 6\textsuperscript{th} - 5\textsuperscript{th} c. BC sherds\textsuperscript{19}.

Discussion

It is clear from the evidence outlined above that the tomb cult on the island over the four and a half centuries covering the Protogeometric and Archaic periods consisted of a series of single events. Apart from the burial at Poros, it always involved the deposition of ceramic vessels, suitable for libations and as offerings, in the interior of the tombs. However, the context, motivation of the participants and presumed recipients of the cult are likely to have differed from period to period in line with the radical changes (historical, political, demographic and social) that would have taken on the island, regarding which we unfortunately have no help from written sources and only limited help from archaeology.

The archaeological evidence for Protogeometric period settlement on Kefalonia is negligible\textsuperscript{20}, although the rich pottery deposits of this date from Ithaki (the Polis cave and Aetos) should act as a warning that this may be due to factors such as taphonomy, the burial customs of the time (single burials in cists) etc. But undoubtedly the end of Mycenaean era would not have been smooth, and inevitably changes in settlement pattern, people movements and social realignments must have taken place. The last phase of Mycenaean settlement on the island had been a fairly prosperous one, with the communities maintaining the traditional Mycenaean hierarchical organization, ideals of military prowess and lively inter-regional contacts\textsuperscript{21}. At the turn of the 10\textsuperscript{th} c. BC that

\textsuperscript{16} Σπ. Μαρινάτας, «Αι ανασκαφαί Γοεκοορ εν Καφαλληνία», ΑΕ 1933, 98. The motif on the pithos (Εικ. 44) has a close parallel in a terracotta architectural relief from the archaic period temple of Minies on the west coast of Livatho (Π. Καλλιγάς [supra n. 14], 83). The inverted Lambda on this piece also occurs on an inscription on the shoulder of a jug from Aetos (Ithaki), which has been dated to 700 BC (Heurtley & Robertson [supra n. 11], 80-82, Fig. 34).

\textsuperscript{17} Π. Καλλιγάς, «Κεφαλληνιακά Β’. Κεφαλληνία: Ανασκαφικά ειδήσεις», ΑΑΑ VII, 1974, 186-189.

\textsuperscript{18} Marinatos published photos of two of these vessels (the skyphos, AM 1798, and the alabastron AM1802) in «Κεφαλληνία. Ιστορικός και Αρχαιολογικός Περιπατός», Τ.Ε.Τ. Καφαλληνίας, 124, Εικ. 18.

\textsuperscript{19} The jug (now lost) was illustrated by Marinatos in “Αι ανασκαφαί Γοεκοορ εν Κεφαλληνία”, ΑΕ 1932, 1-47, Εικ. 8:110.

\textsuperscript{20} A. Sotiriou excavated a cist-grave cemetery in Same at which pottery dating from the Late Protogeometric to the Geometric pottery accompanied the burials. See A. Sotiriou, “Excavations at Kefalonia during 2005-2013. Kefalonia during the historical period”, Phoros 19(1), 2013, 4-6.

glorious period was still within what are held to be the memory limits of oral history (about 100 years), so even if the tombs were not all visible (although the tholos tombs would almost certainly have been), it is likely that their locations would have been remembered, and possibly even with stories about the people. This could have made the tombs’ occupants worthy of gifts, perhaps as hypothetical ancestors or guarantors of future success for the living at a time of radical change.

Settlement remains from the Geometric period (9th-8th c. BC) have only come to light on the island in the last twenty years, significantly in the areas of the ancient city-states of Pale, Krane and Same, but the evidence is overall still limited22. It is only for the Archaic period (7th-6th c. BC) that archaeological remains have been revealed in all of the four territories of the ancient poleis on the island, and they include tombs, settlement remains and temples. The 8th-7th centuries mark the peak of tomb cult in Greece in general. The prevailing opinion of scholars (J.-P. Vernant, F. De Polignac, I. Morris, J. Whitley among others) that the practice is related to the pressures and concerns arising from the foundation of the city-states, albeit in different ways in each case, would suit Kephalonia as well. The poleis of the tetrapolis would have emerged as parallel developments on the island, as suggested by brief references in Thucydides and Diodorus. Any rivalries for dominance or status between them could have found the ancestral links with mythical, legendary or local heroes of great use. The Corinthians who probably established a trading station on Ithaki in the 8th century are thought by some to have also settled on Kephalonia23, although this cannot be adequately substantiated. If so, however, they may have contributed to the tensions and the need to seek legitimation by resorting to ancestral forces. In a sense it is not important to know who were the presumed recipients of the offerings. But we cannot exclude the possibility that in due course they may have comprised the ‘brave Kephallenians’ of Homer among the heroic ancestors. It is likely that some version of the poems, if not the actual Homeric verses, had reached western Greece and even Italy by the end of the 8th century24. We should also note that the renewed tomb cult in the 7th-6th century may have been given an extra impetus at a time of a rise in piety in the cities to judge from the temples that were now built to the gods as evidenced at Minies (Livatho) and Skala (Pronnioi), and where the gods would certainly have received frequent gifts.

Tomb cult in in Kephalonia: from the Classical to the end of the Hellenistic periods (5th-1st c. BC)
The most important location of tomb cult in these centuries was the Metaxata cemetery and particularly tomb A25. The evidence, which is exclusively ceramic, came from three

22 A. Σωτηρίου, «Νομός Κεφαλληνίας. Κλασική πόλη Πάλη» ΑΔ 51, 81 Χρον., 1996, 244, 249; idem, «Νομός Κεφαλληνίας. Κλασική πόλη Πάλη» ΑΔ 52, 1997, 310; idem, «Νεώτερα στοιχεία της αρχαίας μνημειακής τοπογραφίας της νήσου Κεφαλονιάς», Πρακτικά Στ’ Διεθνούς Πανιόνιου Συνεδρίου, Ζάκυνθος, 23-27, τόμος Α’, Θεσσαλονίκη, 121-122; Sotiriou (supra n. 20).
23 Καλλιάνη (supra n. 8) 75.
24 The evidence for this consists of the much-discussed bronze tripods (9th-8th c. BC) from the Polis cave on Ithaki and the so-called “Nestor’s cup” from Pithecusa (Ischia), 725-700 BC., with inscribed hexameter lines referring to the hero’s cup. In support of the Homeric connection, see I. Malkin, The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1998.
25 Μαρινάτος, (supra n. 16) 77-79, 97-100; See Alcock (supra n. 3) 462; Antonaccio (supra n. 1) 138-139.
areas: firstly, the middle and top-most of the three strata of the fill of the tomb’s chamber (which was 1.50 m thick, reaching up to 50 cm from the roof); secondly, the short steeply inclined dromos of the tomb; and thirdly, a small poorly preserved apsidal structure termed the sekos (shrine) by Marinatos, which was located about 10 m west of the tomb. The pottery and tiles found in the field in front of the tomb were believed to come from the sekos (the tiles evidently from the roof of the structure). As mentioned above, more pottery was collected from this field during the LVS survey as well as 450 pieces from tiles. Marinatos commented on the uniformity of the material from all the areas, but only illustrated a small number of diagnostic sherds (today unfortunately lost), including the handles of a 5th-c. BC amphora, the conical foot of a Hellenistic kantharos and the upper part of another, decorated in the West Slope style (all datable to 4th - 2nd c. BC). The terminus ante quem was provided by a 1st c. BC Megarian bowl from the sekos, now lost, the only complete vessel recovered from the excavation. The extant material from the site, including the material collected during the LVS survey, is largely compatible with a Hellenistic date (4th century and later) although some pieces could be 5th century. The conclusive evidence in support of cult at the tomb was a conduit (dia: 20 cm) that had been drilled through the 2 m-deep roof of the chamber (Fig. 3) and believed to have been intended for the pouring of libations. There is no way of knowing, however, whether this was constructed and used during this phase alone or dates from an earlier stage of cult at the tomb.

The site was largely destroyed and any interpretation of the activity there on the basis of the distribution of the pottery is impossible. The great fragmentation of the latter stands witness to the intensive use of the site, but also to the disturbances in the course of the centuries after it ceased being used. At the time of the excavation the entrance and stomion of the tomb had already been destroyed and the monolithic door lay to one side. Some insight however can be gained from the type of pottery recovered from the site, a selection of which is illustrated in Fig. 11. Among the small pots are drinking vessels (cup, skyphos, kantharos, kylix,) (Fig. 11: d-g) and plates (Fig. 11: h-i). There are some painted lekanai/kraters (Fig. k, l), but many more large plain lekanai (Fig. 11: j, o). Large-size pottery, including transport amphorae (Fig. 11: a-c) and storage containers (pithoi) (Fig. 11: n, p) are well represented as are cooking vessels (chytrai and lopades) (Fig. 11: m). The base of an unguentarium (Fig. 11: q) was collected during the survey. At least one lamp was also found during the excavation. There was nothing of votive character among the material from the site, unless the loomweights (one of two, Fig. 11: r) are considered as such.

During this period there is evidence for the reuse of other tombs in Livatho as well as elsewhere on the island (see Fig. 1 ), nowhere however is this as intensive and long-lasting as at Metaxata A. Marinatos found some ‘black-glaze’ sherds in the fill of Metaxata tomb B, 200 m SW of tomb A, but thought that they might also have been accidental intrusions after the collapse of the roof of the tomb. However, a pair of spools found in the fill are also likely post-Mycenaean offerings as is an amphora from the chamber floor, which the excavator regarded as inconsistent with the Mycenaean pottery. At Krane

26 The material from the tomb is preserved in the Argostoli Museum in two boxes labeled «Μεταξάτα Α-Επίχώσια Α» and «Μεταξάτα Α-Επίχώσια Β» and a third box labeled «Μεταξάτα Α-Δρόμος». The sherds are unmarked and there is no certainty that they are not mixed. There is no container marked «Σηκός».

27 Μαρινάτος (supra n. 16) Eik. 45-46.

28 The material is on going and will be presented fully elsewhere.

29 Μαρινάτος (supra n. 16) 80, 97-98; Alcock (supra n. 3) 466.

30 Μαρινάτος (supra n. 16) 9, Eik. 38. Marinatos regarded the spools as Mycenaean, but similar ones were found by Blegen with the historical dated material (Late Geometric and later) in the Mycenaean chamber.
(Diakata) Kavvadias reported finding figurines of the god Pan in one of the tombs, which he associated with the worship of the god. In the Paliki peninsula, Marinatos found evidence of possible later disturbances at the looted tombs of Kontogenada, but did not provide details. However, post-Mycenaean artefacts were recovered recently from the excavation of a chamber tomb at Parisata to the south of Kontagenada (reported by E. Papafloratou at this conference). In the SE of the island, Kolonas found Hellenistic pottery and iron strigils during the excavation of the monumental tholos tomb at Tzannata near Poros. The latter appear to be the only non-ceramic depositions in the tombs of Kephalonia.

Discussion

The Hellenistic period saw tomb cults spreading wider on the island as well as the intensification of the cult at Metaxata. The phenomenon corresponds with the period of radical developments in the cities of the tetrapolis, the rise in population levels and the expansion of the built environment (including the monumentalization of the acropoleis), our knowledge of which has been greatly enhanced by research and excavation in recent decades. Outside the cities, the countryside was heavily exploited. From the 5th century onwards the chora of the cities was dotted with cemeteries several of which continued in use until the Roman period. In the district of Livatho, the Classical-Hellenistic cemeteries are often found in close proximity to the Mycenaean tombs, and the latter were undoubtedly discovered while digging the graves, if not during agricultural activities. The fact that they may only have received offerings in the 4th century, and not a century before, may be due to societal changes. While the ideology of the classical polis had promoted the public concerns of the citizens as a body, the Hellenistic period saw the concerns of the individual return centre stage. Linear descent and citizenship were valued less than personal aggrandizement and wealth. Nonetheless, ancestors, including heroes of every kind, remained of enormous value for self-promotion and personal propaganda, providing scope for tomb cults. If on Kephalonia, as elsewhere, the Hellenistic period witnessed the development of large-scale farming, the tombs of “ancestors” could have been seen either as a justification for further expansion by wealthy landowners or, alternatively, as a way of sealing ownership by small landowners defending their property, as has been suggested for other regions.

The case of Metaxata A is quite exceptional compared to the cult at other tombs. While elsewhere on the island the depositions of offerings was transient as in previous centuries, the cult at Metaxata A was a recurrent event, at least between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC, and made use of some permanent fixtures at the site such as the sekos and the conduit for libations. The statistics from the subdivision into functional categories of the pottery summarised above are revealing. Almost 60% of the extant pottery from the tombs at Prosymna (C. Blegen, “Post-Mycenaean deposits in chamber tombs”, ΑΕ 1934, 383, Fig. 38). Spoons are also found in sanctuaries (e.g. the Argive Heraion). The amphora (reg. no. AM 1476), described as ‘metallic’ Marinos (supra n. 16) 83, Eik. 29, is unfortunately lost.

31 Ν. Κυπαρίσσης & Α. Φιλαδέλφεως, “Ανασκαφές εν Κεφαληνία κατά το θέρος του έτους 1912», ΠΑΕ 1912, 117-118. Several broken terracotta figurines of Pan were found in Diakata tomb 2. This report mentions that they were mixed with ash and animal bones, but in the later publication of the contents of the tombs, Kyparissos (AD 5, 1919, 83-122) links the ash and bones with the Mycenaean burials in the tomb (ibid, 98-99). The worship of Pan would not preclude a parallel cult of the dead, but no other post-Mycenaean artefacts were reported from the tomb.

32 Marinos (supra n. 16) 70.


34 For the results of recent campaigns, see Sotiriou (supra n. 20).

35 See Alcock (supra n. 3).
site consisted of vessels for food preparation and storage, 28% was finer ware pottery for food consumption (drinking and eating), 6% cooking wares, 5% were large containers for transport (amphoras) and storage (pithoi), and 1% were the other items. As was said above, fine pottery was limited. This class of pottery cannot have served simply for the pouring of libation and the large storage and transport containers and large food preparation vessels in particular are quite unlikely as offerings only, strongly suggesting that those present also took part in drinking and eating activities.

The domestic nature of the pottery at Metaxata is not unique for Hellenistic tomb cults in Greece in general. It is similarly attested in Messenia where the majority of definite cases of tomb reuse are documented for this period[36]. Banqueting at the site of the tomb has been suggested in many cases, particularly when ash-layers and animal bones have been found[37]. The cooking or consumption of meat is however not in evidence at Metaxata, given the absence of traces of fire or animal bones.

In conclusion, the evidence at Metaxata A suggests a highly structured, regularly occurring event at which wine and food was shared in honour of some presumed illustrious and possibly heroized ancestors. We can hypothesize that the events were organized by families with considerable wealth derived from the land, who used the cult to enhance their elite status in society, and possibly even secure high office in the city.

Conclusion

Kephalonia is a rare case of a region with evidence of such lengthy diachronic tomb cult (11th-1st c BC). However, this was not without temporal interruptions, certainly between ca. 900 BC and about 750 BC, and less obviously between the mid 6th and sometime in the 5th century. It is possible that the cult during these periods was mostly addressing the concerns of the cities and the citizen body as a whole, but private interests, particularly landownership cannot be excluded as motives either. In the latter case members of the aristocracy are the most likely votaries, given the fine character of much of the pottery dedicated.

In most instances the cult was transient and of symbolic nature. Metaxata is the clear exception to this. Here the cult developed from being transient in the 8th and 7th-6th centuries to a recurrent activity at Metaxata A in the Hellenistic period. The significant focus that the location at Metaxata acquired can be explained through the workings of collective memory which, according to memory studies (M. Halbwacks, P. Nora, J. Assmann), can be stored for long in monuments, but is constantly 'recycled' acquiring new meanings from period to period and one historical context to another. The significance of Metaxata was enhanced in the Hellenistic period by the acts of repeated generations and became what Nora called a (topographical) lieu de mémoire. Accordingly the potential recipients of the cult were not a constant, but would have been drawn from the vast spectrum of heroes, ancestors and heroized mortals depending on the historical circumstances of the time.

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[36] In many cases of Hellenistic tomb reuse, the material is regarded as the result of dumping and other profane activities. Alcock (supra n. 3, 460-447) lists all the tombs with evidence of later use, separating them into definite and possible cases of cult (12 and 26 respectively). The majority of the definite examples come from Messenia (ibid, 460-462 and n. 10) and are also discussed by Koppéč (supra n. 3) and Antonaccio (supra n. 1).

[37] See Alcock (supra n. 3) 452-453.
Fig. 2

Fig. 3